



# SUNDAY 19 MAY 2024

## DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

**The Parishes of:** Bishop Auckland || Newton Aycliffe & Shildon || Willington  
Crook, Tow Law & Wolsingham || Tudhoe || Coundon, Ferryhill & Windlestone

### ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

#### Pentecost Sunday (B) : John 20: 19-23

I like watching 'University Challenge'. I tend to congratulate myself if I understand the questions, let alone the answers. I hear words I've never heard before.

Every discipline has its own language, its technical terms, its jargon and its in-house lingo. Religion has too.

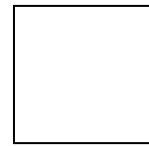
Some Church language doesn't do anything for us. Its use of words like incarnation, redemption or salvation are a form of shorthand for things crying out for fuller treatment. We need people who can put things into words for us that we readily understand. Being full of knowledge doesn't equate with putting over the message in user-friendly ways. So much needs interpreting. Those who've made the message their own through prayerful reflection to make Jesus' teaching personal often do it best.

At Pentecost, God's Spirit gifted the apostles and their hearers with a message that got through to everyone. The Spirit empowered and enabled the apostles to share the Good news of God's love - and their multinational hearers to receive and understand it. But that's not all. The Spirit is also part of the revelation. The medium is also the message. God's visiting presence calls for our acceptance. But be warned. There are consequences. We're called to renew the face of the earth.

The arrival of the Holy Spirit is not subtle. The sound of a powerful wind filled the house and fire appeared on the heads of the apostles. Both images herald change - destroying what's weak and temporary and bringing to mere mortals the searing love of the Father and the Son. This gift, in Jesus' words, will lead us to the complete truth - to a radical Gospel of love that we learn by watching Jesus, and making our home in his words. In the gifts of the Spirit we have been given, we're urged increasingly to think and do as Jesus did. It's a bold mission. Forget comfortable nostalgia. The Church that Jesus needs always requires re-thinking.

Today's Gospel reminds us of our sinfulness. We need forgiving. Complacency and settled mediocrity hold back the community of Jesus' followers that we call the Church. Pope Francis takes the lead in calling for a field-hospital Church that tends the wounded. He reminds us that sharing a common home, we must create a solidarity to heal an exploitative and selfish society and that God's kingdom welcomes everyone.

Our task in understanding, living and bringing the love message of Jesus into all our dealings can never be finished. It's always a work in progress - as you and I are too, out in the wind of the Spirit, the breath of God. Happy birthday, young Church.



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#### Pope Francis on increasing our awareness

A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power. This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products. They prove successful in changing the way businesses operate, forcing them to consider their environmental footprint and their patterns of production. When social pressure affects their earnings, businesses clearly have to find ways to produce differently. This shows us the great need for a sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers. Purchasing is always a moral - and not simply economic act. Today, in a word, the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle.

The Earth Charter asked us to leave behind a period of self-destruction and make a new start, but we have not as yet developed a universal awareness needed to achieve this. Here, I would echo that courageous challenge: As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

**- *Laudato Si paras 206-207***